

II. Military Organization

701 An army, properly speaking, with cadres and hierarchies, did not exist among the Mossi.

721 In the event of war, the Tansoba or Tampsoba (war minister) notified the canton chiefs who promptly assembled with all their able-bodied men and as many horsemen as possible.

705 The villages were charged with feeding the soldiers.

III. Judicial Organization

692 Justice was rendered in conformity with local customs which
693 had been handed down from generation to generation and according to local practice.

1. By village chiefs, assisted by some of the elders, for petty affairs, pilfering, and insults.

2. The canton chief, assisted by his court dignitaries and the minister, ruled on matters concerning theft, adultery, and bodily attacks, as well as on other matters.

3. The Mogho Naba took cognizance of all matters of general interest, especially with crimes of assassination and murder. In theory, he could by himself pronounce the death sentence on the
[565] nakomsé [descendants of Mogho Naba]. Contrary to general belief, a [56] kombéré (canton chief) also had the power of life and death over his subjects. How many individuals have been put to death merely because they were wealthy! How many village chiefs have been killed by the canton chiefs over their territories without any intervention by the Mogho Naba! The nakomsé could
565 be executed, however, only for very serious crimes, such as
684 adultery with a woman of the nobility. The guilty man was led
762 into the bush by old nakomsé; they gave him a rope with which he was expected to hang himself and thus expiate his crime.

694 Justice was free; no fee was expected or assessed. The plaintiff,
431 however, customarily presented the naba with a white or light gray rooster, accompanied by the traditional satchel containing from 200 to 1,000 cowries.